

750,000 public workers go out British general strike defends pensions

By John Catalinotto

Some 750,000 public workers in Britain held the strongest one-day labor action in that country since the 1980s. A vicious attack upon the working class, as is going on in much of Europe and the United States, left the workers no choice but to take action June 30. In Britain, the government plans to cut public workers' pensions and increase the retirement age.

The Public and Civil Service Union, the National Union of Teachers, the University and College Union and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers called the strike to protest the Conservative-Liberal regime's plan to plunder public workers' pensions.

The Treasury says it wants a deal with unions by November so that 50 percent higher contribution rates, smaller pensions and a later retirement age — 68 instead of 65 — can start to be introduced next April. The union leadership says no, and the membership voted overwhelmingly to strike. For the ATL it was its first national strike in 127 years, which indicates how even the most conservative sectors of the working class have been pushed to the wall.

The workers' struggles in the news this spring and summer from Europe have mostly involved countries on the periphery of the continent. The economies of Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Iceland have suffered tremendously from the capitalist crisis. This has led to extremely high unemployment — 21 percent in Spain — and a nearly unpayable debt to the big banks in France and Germany.

These banks demand guaranteed payments from the peripheral countries. Though they are part of the Eurozone, these countries have been pushed into a position more like those in Asia and Latin America. Their governments follow orders from the European Central Bank, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund to cut social services and privatize all industries.



Public and Commercial Services Union members on strike in London.

PHOTO: PCSUNION

Class struggle in Britain

Britain's sovereignty, in contrast, is not at stake. The British have their own currency, and their banks still suck interest payments from around the world. But the British ruling class, like the others, is squeezing all sectors of the workers at home as much as possible, just like in the U.S. Right now the British public sector workers have been targeted.

The government announced its austerity plan last year. This at first led to local anti-austerity demonstrations. Then at the end of 2010, students poured into the streets to fight against severe increases in tuition. Now public workers have joined the struggle.

The British corporate media continuously repeat the lies that public workers are "privileged" and should make "their share" of sacrifices. They try to drive a wedge between public sector and private sector workers. This is similar to

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CALIFORNIA

Prisoners launch hunger strike Charge torture at Pelican Bay

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

"This is a formal complaint and request for action to end 20-plus years of state-sanctioned torture in order to extract information from or cause mental illness to California inmates incarcerated indefinitely in punitive isolation at Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Units (PBSP-SHU). ..." Thus begins the eloquent legal complaint and human rights indictment written by prisoners incarcerated in one of California's most notorious torture and isolation prisons — Pelican Bay State Prison.

Located in California's northwesternmost Del Norte County, PBSP is home to lockdown units called "security housing units" where prisoners sit in long-term solitary confinement for 23 and a half hours per day for months and years on end.

Between 50 and 100 prisoners went on an indefinite hunger strike July 1 on D-Corridor at PBSP-SHU to draw attention to "25 years of torture via the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) arbitrary, illegal, and progressively

more punitive policies and practices." PBSP prisoners issued five core demands directed at ending the long-term isolation and segregation of prisoners. Demands focused on basic human needs — prisoners should receive adequate food and diet, natural sunlight, and quality health care and treatment. SHU prisoners also are demanding an end to group punishment and expanded access to visiting, phone calls and outside correspondence.

The United Nations and international justice courts have long ruled that long-term isolation and sensory deprivation are torture.

'Fight to right this wrong'

CDCR uses SHU incarceration to punish prisoners who are "suspected" gang members, outspoken activists, rebels or those who just don't conform to prison rules. Once thrown in the SHU, prisoners are faced with the choice of "debriefing," known as snitching, which usually involves naming other prisoners who will then be sent to the SHU. If a prisoner does not de-

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Behind the Strauss-Kahn case The IMF rapes the world

By Heather Cottin
New York

The hotel housekeeper who accused then-head of the International Monetary Fund Dominique Strauss-Kahn of raping her is fighting back after a media barrage meant to defame her character and undermine her credibility. This brave woman has filed a libel suit against the New York Post for a series of articles in which the paper, in vulgar and demeaning terms, openly claimed she was a prostitute.

The Post, a right-wing Murdoch tabloid, is infamous for its vicious language and disregard for truth. But it wasn't that newspaper that started this campaign to discredit the woman who says she was attacked by Strauss-Kahn. That role was taken by the supposedly liberal New York Times, which opened an offensive against her with several articles, beginning June 30 with "Strauss-Kahn Prosecution Said to Be Near Collapse." The articles were supposedly based on information from two unnamed "well-placed law enforcement officials."

Immediately, a judge granted Strauss-Kahn bail, and he was released.

The Times articles unleashed a media frenzy of attacks and speculation on the woman's character. None of it had anything to do with whether this powerful and wealthy man had actually attacked her. The conclusion that the case against Strauss-Kahn had now been totally blown apart disregarded the fact that her account of what happened was corroborated by DNA findings in the hotel room and by a medical check of her body after the event.

Moreover, other women who say they were attacked by him are coming forward. Tristane Banon, a French journalist and writer, has filed a lawsuit against Strauss-Kahn for attempted rape. It had already been known that in 2008 he coerced a subordinate into an affair who filed a complaint. The IMF board called Strauss-Kahn's behavior "regrettable" but took no other action.

"All journalists knew he had a special behavior with women," says Marion Van Renterghem, a reporter for Le Monde. "Why did all we journalists ... never write a line about this?"

Guilty of raping whole countries

The word "rape" means "sexual violation or ravishing" of a person by force. It also means plundering and despoiling a country, often during war. As head of the IMF Strauss-Kahn administered a program of worldwide rape of women and children — the majority of the world's people.

He began before he was head of the IMF. As the French Minister of Economics, Finances and Industry, he implemented a wide privatization program, selling France's public property to the highest bidder. As director of the IMF, he was in charge of the largest public lender of funds in the world. In league with rich and powerful leaders of 186 countries, the IMF sets up economic "reform" programs, otherwise known as structural adjustment programs.

SAPs require poor countries to privatize public property and reduce spending on health, education and development to pay their debt service. This lowers the standard of living of poor nations. Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize winner for economics, said, "The IMF likes to go about its business without outsiders asking too many questions. ... But all the power in the negotiations is on one side — the IMF's." This, he said, forces farmers in some countries to compete with heavily subsidized U.S. agribusiness, which "drives down the price and forces these farmers out of business."

IMF policies have been raping poor people all over the world for some time. In Guinea, the African country from which the housekeeper emigrated, life expectancy is 45 years. SAPs forced Guinea to privatize its government-owned enterprises, remove price controls, raise the price of food and lay off public workers. It is a rich country with almost half of the world's bauxite reserves, but only 24 percent of the population is literate; there is one doctor per 46,000 people.

During Strauss-Kahn's tenure another big loan was set up, so that Guinea is now more than \$3 billion in debt. (CIA World Factbook) This is the rape of a nation.

The IMF can be held responsible for the hundreds of millions of African, Latin American and Asian people, like the hotel housekeeper, who, because of increasing poverty, have been forced to migrate. As a report by the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants states, "Migration of peoples from these poor countries became a forced one as people were left with no option but to find work overseas." The IMF has actually encouraged the Philippine government to export its own people. (apmigrants.org, July 2009)

Immigrants send more than \$200 billion home annually in remittances to keep their families alive.

Jamaica is an example. Debt service comprised more than 56 percent of its 2009-2010 budget. Jamaica has become one of the IMF's most highly indebted countries in the world. Its payments for debt service steal food, health care and education from the people.

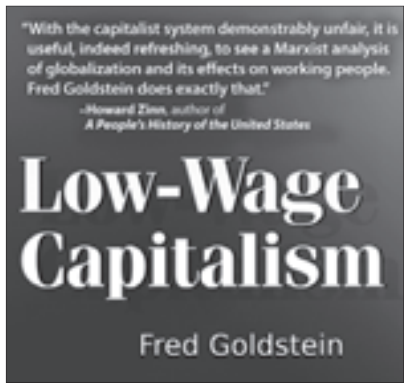
This is rape: "Two out of every three poor adults are women." "Women do two-thirds of the world's work, receive 10 percent of the world's income and own 1 percent of the means of production." (Richard H. Robbins, "Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism")

This is rape: "It is estimated that each year more than half a million women — roughly one woman every minute — die as a result of pregnancy complications and childbirth," 99 percent of which occur in developing countries. Yet "many of these women's lives could be saved if they had access to basic health care services." (globalissues.org)

This is rape: Half the world — more than 3 billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day and at least 80 percent on less than \$10 a day. The gap between rich and poor is widening. This is directly due to the IMF's programs.

This is rape: 22,000 children die every day around the world, mostly in the poorest countries indebted to the IMF. This has been going on before, during and after Dominique Strauss-Kahn was in charge.

When Dominique Strauss-Kahn took over in 2007, the countries of the world owed the IMF more than \$4 trillion — a 70 percent increase since 2000. This went up even more during his tenure. Strauss-Kahn raped the world. □



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Resistance to hate bill heats up

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Tens of thousands of immigrants and their supporters filled blocks of Atlanta's downtown streets on July 2 wearing white, carrying beautiful banners and hand-printed signs, and chanting non-stop in English and Spanish.

Many of the slogans referenced HB 87, Georgia's "show me your papers" legislation, which authorizes local police to act as immigration agents and is designed to intimidate undocumented workers into leaving the state.

The march was led by members of the Georgia Undocumented Youth Alliance (GUYA), who are challenging the restrictions on their future and calling for passage of the DREAM Act. Banners called for an end to the raids and deportations.

Many children carried signs pleading not to deport their parents. Challenging the racist aspects of the law, a huge banner depicting a strong Latina declared: "Brown Is Beautiful." Numerous signs referenced the millions of dollars already lost to the state's agricultural economy as crops rotted in the fields for lack of skilled farmworkers.

Four counties in Georgia operate under 287(g) agreements that have resulted in the detention and deportation of thousands of immigrants, most of whom were arrested for traffic infractions. The largest, privately operated detention center is in the town of Lumpkin and holds some 1,900 men.

Corrections Corporation of America, which operates the Stewart Detention Center there, has been denounced for its profiteering off the separation of immigrant families.

The failure of the Obama administration and Congress to address legalization and a just immigration policy was addressed in chants and on placards.

In response to a call by the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR), protesters came from across the state, from as far as Valdosta, Dalton, Columbus and Rome. Supporters from North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee and as far away as Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arizona, California and New York joined the protest.

Week of intense struggle

The march and rally at the Georgia State Capitol capped off a week of intense struggle by immigrant communities and human rights advocates.

On June 27 a federal district judge agreed to grant a temporary injunction suspending two sections of HB 87, scheduled to be enacted on July 1. Judge Thomas Thrash stopped Georgia from giving law enforcement agencies throughout the state the power to detain and arrest anyone who could not show sufficient identification following any violation, no matter how minor, including traffic stops or jaywalking. He also prevented the implementation of a provision that would make it illegal to knowingly transport or harbor an undocumented person.

This is the fourth federal court that has barred states from assuming responsibility for enforcing immigration policies.

While immigrant and civil rights activists hailed this victory in stopping two of the most egregious sections of HB 87, Georgia law now makes it a crime to use false documents to secure a job, punishable by 15 years in prison. Starting in January, most private employers will be required to use the federal E-Verify system, known to be flawed, to ascertain the legality of new hires. Citizens will be able to sue elected



Women march behind banner saying "Undocumented, Unafraid, Unashamed, Unapologetic!"

PHOTO: KUNG LI

officials for failing to uphold HB 87.

The day after the federal ruling, GUYA held a "Coming Out of the Shadows" rally inside the state Capitol building where five young people from Georgia and one from New York told their stories. Each concluded by saying their name and that they were "undocumented and unafraid."

At an outside rally, longtime civil rights leaders and members of the African-American religious community proclaimed their support for the immigrants' rights movement. They applauded the role of young people in confronting injustice, risking their lives and safety to bring about needed change.

Dressed in caps and gowns, the students led a crowd of hundreds in a march around Georgia State University, one of the state's five institutions of higher education which the Georgia legislature has banned undocumented youth from attending.

Their lead banner read "Undocumented, Unafraid, Unashamed, Unapologetic!"

Returning to the Capitol, the students spread a large canvas with the words "We Will No Longer Remain in the Shadows" in the intersection and sat down surrounded by supporters. Traffic was brought to a standstill. Eventually, many police arrived and arrested the six. As each heroic youth was taken to a police car, dozens of chanting young people surrounded them and the vehicle.

All six were charged with multiple state offenses. Three were released to their par-

ents' custody because they were under 17. The other three spent the night in the Fulton County Jail and were then released on their own recognizance with an August court date.

This was the second such civil disobedience action in Atlanta with undocumented youth risking deportation to press the issue of the status of children who have spent most of their lives in the United States and have no path to legalization. Without papers, they cannot get a driver's license, find employment, receive public benefits or attend Georgia's top five universities, regardless of their grades.

July 1 strike spurs resistance

During the week, a number of community meetings were held in metro Atlanta to provide information in multiple languages — from Korean and Chinese to Portuguese and Spanish — about the impact of HB 87 and the injunction. Similar events were organized around the state, including one in Dalton where people were particularly concerned about police roadblocks in immigrant neighborhoods. Students and community members held a rally in Athens on June 30 at the gates to the University of Georgia, one of the universities barred to undocumented students.

On July 1, the day HB 87 went into effect, GLAHR called for a "Day without Immigrants," a stay-at-home strike where people would not work, shop or go about their usual business. More than 125 businesses owned by immigrants, from beau-

ty shops to food markets, closed that day in solidarity. Restaurant, construction, landscaping, hotel and other workers took the day off. Shopping mall parking lots in immigrant communities were empty.

People outside Georgia are encouraged to cancel any conventions, reunions, meetings or vacations as part of the "Boycott of a State of Hate."

Volunteers are coming from throughout the country this summer to help build local resistance to HB 87 and other anti-immigrant legislation. A campaign to identify "BuySpots" and "Sanctuary Zones" will identify businesses that agree to publicly oppose HB 87 by refusing to allow police into their establishments to check people's identification without a warrant and by pledging not to financially support elected officials who promote anti-immigrant legislation.

Already many bookstores, restaurants, clothing and record stores, markets, beauty and barber shops display the BuySpot sign. Churches and other religious institutions, community centers, homeless shelters and other public gathering sites that make a similar pledge will be identified as Sanctuary Zones. For more information, visit WeAreGeorgia.org.

It is hot in Georgia during any summer, but this summer the heat will be on right-wing politicians, spotlighted by a rising people's movement engaging thousands of workers, youth and women. They are stepping out of the shadows, undocumented and unafraid. □

Immigrant workers charge wage theft

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

At a press conference held June 29 outside Minute Men Staffing in the predominantly Latino/a neighborhood of southwest Detroit, current and former workers at Mastronardi Produce in Livonia, Mich., spoke of their dual exploitation by the company and the Minute Men temporary agency.

Many workers talked about long, unpaid hours waiting for a job assignment. Often the staffing agency would then send them home. If chosen, they were crammed into vans and taken to Mastronardi's factory, where they might again wait outside in the cold until they were needed.

Like many companies and temp agencies, Mastronardi and Minute Men take advantage of workers' undocumented

status and fear of retaliation and being deported. The immigrant workers who spoke at the press conference showed great courage. However, with Detroit's unemployment rate well above the national average, many African-American, white and documented Latino/a workers are desperate for work and have also experienced the horrors of working at Mastronardi through the agency of Minute Men.

On-the-job conditions at Mastronardi are deplorable. Workdays of 12 and even more hours are the norm. Worker safety is blatantly disregarded. Examples given were that workers were forced to work around poisonous gases, including during a major leak of ammonia, and were denied bathroom breaks. Injured workers, including an eight-year employee who spoke, get no compensation. The Southeast Michigan Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (Semcosh) has filed

complaints on behalf of the workers.

A lawsuit filed by the Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Social and Economic Justice charges Mastronardi and Minute Men with improper paycheck deductions, unpaid work time and violations of overtime and minimum wage laws. The workers had to pay for the van rides and for employee identification badges and were docked for "nonexistent lunch periods and breaks," according to the Center.

Maurice Sugar was the attorney for the United Auto Workers during the 1937 Flint sit-down strike. He and Jane Sugar were prominent labor and civil rights attorneys in Detroit for many years.

Speaking in support of the workers were State Rep. Rasheeda Tlaib and Detroit City Council member Kwame Kenyatta, along with representatives of the Sugar Law Center, Semcosh and the Alliance for Immigration Reform. □

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Activist arrested for videotaping police

By Gene Clancy
Rochester, N.Y.

Political activist Emily Good was awakened by police lights flashing in front of her home in an oppressed community on May 12. Concerned about previous cases of Rochester police profiling, she went outside and began videotaping.

Ryan Acuff, Good’s friend and fellow activist, described the scene:

“We both went outside to see what the commotion was about, and we found two police cars blocking the street as they were performing a traffic stop. Later on a third police car pulled up, making a total of four officers on the scene. The person pulled over was a young Black male. It was unclear why the man was originally pulled over, but one of the officers interrogated the man and accused him of possessing drugs.

“Not satisfied with the man’s answers, the police took the man out of his car, handcuffed and put him in the back of a police car. After the man was detained, the police officers searched his car and found no drugs. The officers then released the man and said he was free to go.” (rochester.indymedia.org)

When one of the officers spotted

Good and her camera, he demanded that she go back into her house. Good refused, stating that she had a right to be in her own front yard. So the police arrested her for obstructing governmental administration. Acuff picked up the iPod and continued recording the arrest.

In June, Good released the video of her arrest on YouTube and the flagrant actions of the arresting officer caused the clip to go viral. (See entire video on youtube.com, “Rochester police arrest woman”) Good and her attorney were interviewed live on CNN, and the video was played on NBC Nightly News and other corporate outlets.

On June 23 members of the community were attending a meeting at the Flying Squirrel Community Center to discuss Good’s case when four police cars pulled up. Using a ruler, police began issuing parking citations for cars parked too close to or too far from the curb.

On June 27 the District Attorney dismissed the charges against Good, citing a “lack of evidence that any crime had been committed.” (Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, June 28)

While the criminal case against her is over, Good says she is planning to bring a civil lawsuit against the

Rochester Police Department and Officer Mario Masic, who arrested her. (WHEC TV news, June 28)

Good said the dismissal of the charges “felt really good,” but she was still concerned that “the officer who ordered me inside my house has not been held accountable for anything.” She said she is not hopeful that the promised RPD’s internal review will yield results. (Matt Sledge, June 28)

Good plans to seek monetary damages in her lawsuit. She said, “I’m not out for money, but this is definitely more than an inconvenience for my life. And it’s also a language that is powerful for people who operate in this world that seems to revolve around money, so it’s something that would make a statement.”

Good and Acuff are both activists in the Rochester area who have participated in demonstrations against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and against mayoral control of the public school system. Good was one of several people recently arrested while trying to prevent the foreclosure and eviction of a destitute Rochester resident. They and others have called for a civilian review board to monitor the actions of the police. They deserve the solidarity and support of progressives everywhere. □

On the picket line

By Sue Davis

WISCONSIN NURSES

Win contract extension

To circumvent the vicious anti-collective bargaining law that went into effect in Wisconsin on June 30, the Milwaukee County Board voted 15 to 4 on June 23 to extend the contract for the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals Local 5001. Now the members will have union protection covering working conditions, benefits and a grievance procedure through Dec. 31, 2012. Local 5001 attributes the victory to members bombarding the board with phone calls explaining why the extension is win-win for everyone in the county.

MASSACHUSETTS NURSES

Contract improves conditions

Nurses at the Cape Cod and Falmouth Hospitals were able to negotiate better working conditions for both patients and staff in their new three-year contract ratified on June 21. The members of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, an affiliate of National Nurses United, won strict limits on mandatory overtime, staffing improvements, and a process that improves care and protects staff on the CCH psychiatric unit. The nurses also get modest raises: a 2 percent bonus retroactive to Oct. 1, 2010, and 1 percent raises in 2012 and 2013. “In these tough economic times, we were able to achieve important gains, specifically to the quality of our working conditions, which was our primary objective,” said Nicky Powderly, FH bargaining unit chair. “With this agreement, everyone is a winner, particularly our patients.” (MNA release, June 22)

Union charges Target interfered with election

The month before the Food and Commercial Workers lost an election June 17 to unionize workers at a Target store in Valley Stream, N.Y., it filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board charging that Target harassed, intimidated and interfered with the rights of pro-union workers. The workers were protesting the company’s low wages and limited work assignments, which don’t allow workers to adequately support their families. UFCW President Bruce W. Both told the New York Times, “These workers are not backing down from this fight. ... They are demanding a fair election. They are demanding justice and they are prepared to fight for it.” (June 18)

Progressive resolutions by National Writers Union

Four progressive resolutions were passed by the National Writers Union, United Auto Workers Local 1981 at its Delegates Assembly meeting in Detroit, June 24-26. Passed unanimously was one in solidarity with the struggle of public sector workers in Wisconsin to defend their right to collective bargaining. Also passed unanimously, another supported the International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10 action on April 4 in solidarity with the struggle in Wisconsin and called for all charges to be dropped and for all UAW local, regional and national affiliates to defend Local 10.

After noting the huge cost of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, a resolution mandated that the NWU rejoin U.S. Labor Against the War and promote the anti-war movement in the labor community. The final resolution supported the Ethnic Studies program in the Tucson Unified School District, which has been outlawed by Arizona HB 2281, and called on the UAW to file an amicus brief and engage in a broad national education campaign to save the ES program. Rudy Acuna, who wrote the textbook on which the ES program is based, was an honored guest at the DA, inspiring NWU members to fight censorship of his book and to oppose the racism driving it.

Several NWU members took part in a bank invasion and protest on June 11 at a branch of Bank of America during a UAW Region 9A conference in Hartford, Conn. Chanting “Banks got bailed out, we got sold out,” the unionists brought the wrath of the people about the bank bailout and predatory loans that have led to a tsunami of foreclosures to one of the main perpetrators of the housing crisis. Region 9A vowed to include such actions at all future events.

Davis has been a member of the National Writers Union, UAW Local 1981 for 24 years.

CALIFORNIA

Prisoners launch hunger strike

Charge torture at Pelican Bay

Continued from page 1

brief, he or she will spend the rest of their incarceration in a 6-by-10-foot cell, locked down 24 hours a day, with only minimal out-of-cell time for occasional showers and exercise. SHU prisoners generally exercise in cages in isolation from other prisoners.

Mutope Duguma (s/n James Crawford), one of the PBSP hunger strikers, said in a statement posted on the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity blog, “The CDCR uses every trick they can to force men into debriefing, including ever-increasing levels of what can only be described as torture. But if you are innocent, or if you are a principled person, they force you to endure every hardship in an effort to break you.”

PBSP-SHU prisoners suffer daily violations of their First, Fifth, and Eighth Amendment rights, especially their right to be free of punishment for their association with other prisoners and their right to freedom of speech. Prisoners cite the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 1984 convention against torture and cruel, inhumane treatment ratified by the U.S. in 1994 in their legal complaint delivered to former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Feb. 5, 2010.

“The prisoners inside the SHU at Pelican Bay know the risk that they are taking going on hunger strike,” said Manuel LaFontaine of All of Us Or None, a Bay Area organization directed by former prisoners that is taking an active role in the coalition to support prisoners at PBSP. LaFontaine and others held a press conference on the steps of the California State Office Building in downtown



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Oakland, Calif., the day before the hunger strike began. Lawyers and activists from the Prison Activist Resource Center and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children attended and spoke out about the hunger strike.

Despite the risk, reports have come in from other prisons around California, including the SHU at Corcoran State Prison, where prisoners are fasting in solidarity with their comrades at PBSP. Groups of outside prisoner rights activists in Humboldt County (near PBSP), San Francisco and other areas are holding their own solidarity hunger strikes and rallies. California has a long and rich history of support for prisoners’ rights and prison abolition.

From inside the SHU at Pelican Bay State Prison come the words of Mutope Duguma, urging all to support the hunger strike: “I say that those of

you who carry yourselves as principled human beings, no matter your housing status, must fight to right this and other egregious wrongs. Although it is ‘us’ today (united New Afrikans, Whites, Northern and Southern Mexicans, and others) it will be you all tomorrow. It is in your interests to peacefully support us in this protest.”

A rally will be held July 9, 11 a.m., in San Francisco’s U.N. Plaza (Civic Center BART) to show solidarity with the hunger strikers. For more information and to sign the support petition, go to the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity blog or call 510-444-0484.

All quotes are from the blog at prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com.

Greenspan is a longtime prisoners’ rights activist who has visited prisoners in Security Housing Units at California prisons.

Natural gas industry’s puppy

The rise of ‘Toxic Tom’ Corbett

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Gov. Tom Corbett’s first state budget, with its massive draconian cuts in programs that have benefitted working and poor families in Pennsylvania, leaves little doubt: The corporations that poured millions of dollars into his campaign coffers got their money’s worth.

While insisting on \$1.2 billion in spending cuts for education, healthcare, welfare, job training, senior and disabled services, and environmental protection programs, Corbett refused to even consider a tax on Pennsylvania’s booming natural gas industry.

Opinion polls show broad public support for a gas tax. Pennsylvania remains the only state not to tax this industry. Even industry spokespeople have said they would not oppose a limited tax. Yet Corbett vowed to veto any legislation taxing natural gas drilling.

Corbett’s success in last year’s Pennsylvania gubernatorial election was due in large part to the heavy financial backing he received from natural gas drilling companies, eager to take advantage of shale formations like Marcellus and Utica. They are thought to contain massive natural gas reserves worth billions of dollars.

Within the first few months of his term, Corbett took steps to further limit the state’s already weak system of environmental regulation and repealed a moratorium on further leasing of state forest lands for drilling that outgoing Gov. Ed Rendell decreed last October.

In March Corbett established the Mar-

cellus Shale Advisory Commission, comprised primarily of energy executives and contributors to his campaign, to oversee the gas drilling industry. Corbett has said he’ll leave it up to this industry-controlled body to consider if a gas tax is warranted.

Product of Chesapeake Energy

Corbett’s tight relationship with the natural gas industry apparently started long before his 2010 run for governor. It may have played a significant role in turning a relatively obscure politician into a candidate capable of winning statewide office.

Oklahoma City millionaire and “energy mogul” Aubrey McClendon reportedly wrote a \$450,000 check to finance Corbett’s run for Pennsylvania attorney general in 2004. That was the major part of \$720,000 in contributions from an “obscure campaign committee out of Washington called the Republican State Leadership Committee.” Other RSLC contributions to Corbett’s 2004 campaign can be traced to the tobacco and insurance industries. “The influx of cash helped Corbett narrowly win the closest attorney general’s race in Pennsylvania history and propelled him toward the governor’s mansion, where he has now pledged to turn the Keystone State into ‘the Texas of the natural-gas boom.’” (Philadelphia Daily News, June 29)

In 2004 corporate money was banned in Pennsylvania elections. However, the state did allow unlimited campaign contributions from individuals.

McClendon’s company, Chesapeake Energy, is now one of the largest drillers for natural gas. It also was responsible for two major Pennsylvania gas-well acci-

dents last year and is the target of lawsuits involving natural gas leases in Michigan and Maryland.

In April a blowout at a Chesapeake Energy well in Leroy Township led to hazardous chemicals spilling into a creek that flows into the Susquehanna River and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay.

Chesapeake Energy was represented on Corbett’s Marcellus Shale Advisory Committee until the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection imposed a \$900,000 fine on the company for polluting the drinking water of 16 families in Bradford County.

Possible Ponzi scheme

While Corbett has clearly benefited from his cozy relationship with the natural gas industry, questions have arisen lately if investors will be so lucky.

In the June 25 article “Insiders Sound an Alarm Amid a Natural Gas Rush,” New York Times columnist Ian Urbina reported on concerns raised in emails by industry insiders who question “whether companies are intentionally, and even illegally, overstating the productivity of their wells and the size of their reserves.” In April Urbina wrote a four-part series on environmental hazards stemming from natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania and the state’s lack of adequate oversight.

Urbina notes that the gas industry’s promise of big profits may not match the reality. Drillers are discovering that “fracking,” the process of extracting natural gas from deep underground shale formations, may not be as easy and cheap as promoters claim. He notes, “Many of

these emails also suggest a view that is in stark contrast to more bullish public comments made by the industry, in much the same way that insiders have raised doubts about previous financial bubbles.”

One review of data from more than 9,000 wells gathered from 2003 to 2009 found that less than 10 percent of the wells had recouped their estimated costs after operating for seven years.

Some of the gas company industry consultants and analysts who responded to a New York Times survey made comments like “Ponzi schemes,” “Enron moments” and “Reminds you of the dot-coms.”

Massive protests set for Sept. 7-8

Nonetheless, the Marcellus Shale Coalition, a powerful lobbying group that continues to promote drilling in Pennsylvania, plans to hold a big industry trade show dubbed “Shale Gas Insight” in Philadelphia Sept. 7-8.

Chesapeake Energy’s McClendon and CEOs of other energy companies, including Range Resources and CONSOL, will participate in this major industry conference, along with Corbett and other pro-fracking politicians. Tom Ridge, the former governor of Pennsylvania, then Secretary of Homeland Security, and now a paid gas industry “advisor,” will give the keynote address.

Plans are already underway for a massive rally outside this convention on Sept. 7 and a conference for anti-drilling activists on Sept. 8. These actions are being called “Shale Gas Outrage” days. More information is available at www.shale-gasoutrage.org. □

BLACK-WHITE SOLIDARITY

Key to San Francisco’s 1934 general strike

By Cheryl LaBash

Workers call it “Bloody Thursday.”

On July 5, 1934, San Francisco port bosses pulled out all stops trying to break a two-month West Coast dock strike. The workers fought back.

Police that day killed Nick Bordoise and Howard Sperry — two of seven workers killed between May 15 and July 20. The capitalist-class assault on the longshore strike angered rank-and-file workers from 100 unions in the Bay Area. They voted to strike in support of the port workers, overruling conservative union leaders.

On July 16 the four-day San Francisco General Strike began as strikers and National Guard battled for control of the shut-down city.

This is commonly described in labor history. What is not so well-known or emphasized is the conscious and concerted outreach to the African-American community by longshore strike leader Harry Bridges, which for the first time brought

Black workers into the longshore union.

Bridges’ pledge is noted in “An Historical Exhibit by the ILWU,” a traveling art exhibit that commemorates the 1934 strike. A small panel depicting a handcuffed Black worker beside a cop is captioned, “Racial unity is key to the strike’s success and becomes a guiding principle of the union. After the strike, Bridges states that if only two longshore workers are left on the docks, one would be black and the other white.”

Keeping a promise to Black workers

Thomas C. Fleming, co-founder of San Francisco’s African-American weekly, the Sun-Reporter, wrote about his experiences. “In 1934, one of the low years of the Depression, blacks could only work on two piers in San Francisco — the Panama Pacific and the Luckenbach Line. If you went to any other pier down there, you might get beaten up by the hoodlums. ...

“The system on the docks then was called the shape-up, in which the bosses



PHOTO: ILWU ARCHIVES

on all piers selected whom they wished to hire on a daily basis. They held absolute power. No one had a guarantee of a daily job, unless he was a pet of the dock boss, or paid a sum of his daily earning. ...

“Before this time, I clung to views that the trade union movement was just formed to continue racial discrimination. But Bridges ... felt that by keeping the unions lily-white, there would be a steady reservoir of black potential strikebreakers whenever strikes were called, which would weaken the unions when negotiations broke down.

“Bridges went to black churches on both sides of San Francisco Bay and

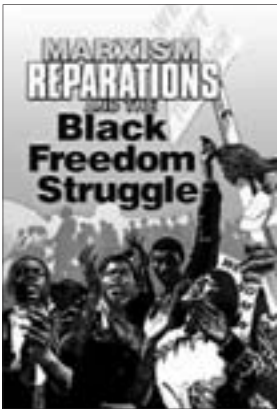
asked the ministers: could he say a few words during the Sunday services? He begged the congregation to join the strikers on the picket line, and promised that when the strike ended, blacks would work on every dock on the West Coast. ...

“The waterfront strike ended on July 31 when the International Longshoremen’s Association [now the ILWU] was recognized by the ship owners. Bridges kept his word: all piers were opened to blacks. They began to get the same work as everyone else, and some later became union officers. As part of the agreement, the [union] got its own hiring hall, which it controlled, and the men got a minimum 30-hour week and a raise to \$1 an hour.” (hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/146.html)

This year on April 4 the rank and file of Harry Bridges’ ILWU Local 10 honored the labor movement’s call for “no business as usual” in solidarity with Wisconsin public workers. The union’s motto, “An injury to one is an injury to all,” and Bridges’ working-class solidarity and unity pledge echoed through the 77 years. They did not report for work.

No cargo moved at the international ports of Oakland and San Francisco for 24 hours, respecting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was assassinated on that date in 1968 while supporting African-American sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., who were striking for collective bargaining rights. That strike’s symbol was the deeply expressive “I am a Man” picket signs.

Dr. King was an honorary member of Local 10 and spoke to workers there only six months before he was assassinated in Memphis. □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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Anti-union laws spur Wisconsin fightback

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

On June 29, the bill stripping at least 175,000 nurses, teachers, emergency responders, state, municipal and local workers of their right to collectively bargain went into effect in Wisconsin. The union-busting bill also increases state employees’ pension contributions by 5.8 percent and health care contributions by 12.8 percent.

While hundreds protested the massive wage cuts contained in the anti-union bill, Gov. Scott Walker signed the 2011-13 state budget June 27 in Green Bay. Even the corporate media were prevented from asking him questions.

The budget, which will have the worst impact on people of color, children and women, contains the biggest cuts in state history in many areas. Yet billions of dollars in tax breaks go to banks, corporations and businesses associated with the Pentagon.

At the same time the budget raises taxes on the working poor by \$70 million while dismantling K-12 public education by \$1.6 billion and slashing funds to the University of Wisconsin by \$250 million and the Wisconsin Technical College System by \$70 million.

Walker also added a provision in the budget before signing it that state workers wouldn’t be eligible for the state pension system until they had worked five years for the state. Other cuts eliminated millions of dollars for programs that help seniors and the disabled.

Another budget item states that the University of Wisconsin System Hospitals and Clinics are now prevented from funding abortions, which is just one of the extreme attacks against women contained in the budget. This measure is representative of the anti-woman climate within the Walker administration.

In one of many reported incidents of physical and verbal abuse related to the budget, state Supreme Court Justice David Prosser has been documented calling his colleague Justice Shirley Abrahamson



Labor, students and grassroots groups denounce Gov. Walker outside Republican fundraiser.

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

the “b” word. Prosser was accused of physically choking Justice Ann Walsh Bradley on June 13, the day before the high court’s release of a decision upholding the bill to curtail the collective bargaining rights of public employees. Prosser hasn’t been arrested or even charged with any crime, despite numerous witnesses stating they saw him physically choke Bradley.

‘Stop the war on workers!’

Instead of quietly submitting to these unprecedented assaults, the poor and working people of Wisconsin resisted statewide. Protests small and large continued the week of June 27 when the austerity budget was passed and the earlier union-busting bill became effective.

“The union movement will continue to be an advocate for social and economic justice in the workplace and in the community,” said Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. “Scott Walker is attacking unions in order to tip the balance toward CEOs and wealthy corporations. The people of Wisconsin will not let themselves be destroyed without a fight. The fight will continue in the courts, in the streets and in the recall districts until justice is restored to Wisconsin.” (wisafclcio.typepad.com/)

The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and other organizations are mobilizing for nine

recall elections scheduled for July and August.

On June 29 hundreds came to a speak-out for jobs in Milwaukee at Vincent High School. The event was part of a congressional listening tour by the Progressive Caucus. Dozens testified on how they couldn’t find a job no matter how hard they tried, and if they did find employment, the jobs weren’t at a living wage or enough to support a family.

The official unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 9.1 percent, the highest since before World War II. One out of two African-American adult males in Milwaukee is unemployed. The attack on public sector unions is thoroughly racist and anti-woman, especially in cities like Milwaukee where a significant number of such workers are Black, Latino/a and/or women. Many at the jobs speak-out demanded a public jobs program.

On June 30 hundreds came out to denounce Walker and the Wisconsin Republican legislator Alberta Darling while they participated in a fundraising event at the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Members of many unions participated, including the Teamsters, Steelworkers, the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-American Federation of Teachers, the Service Employees union and the Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association.

These groups and other labor, community and/or student organizations such as Jobs Now and the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement demanded “Tax the rich” as they engaged in a moving picket line. Protesters hoisted union signs and signs reading “\$ for Jobs and Housing,” “Jobs Not Racism,” “Stop the War on Workers” and “Make the Banks Pay.”

Jeremy Kowalski, a student activist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and an organizer with the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, was one of the protesters. “We need real change which means we must engage in class struggle, we must build class consciousness,” Kowalski told Workers World. “Those in power, the capitalists, are unified in exploiting us, so we — poor and working people — need to be unified in building our own organizations from the grassroots in our communities.

“We also need to have a vision of people before profits, making sure people have food, housing, education, health care and other human needs. Ultimately, we should be fighting for socialism because this is how real, fundamental, change will come — not just replacing one capitalist politician with another.”

For more information, visit wisafclcio.org; wisafclcio.typepad.com; vdlf.org; defendwisconsin.org; and wibailout-people.org.

Pa. budget robs poor, gives to rich

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives approved a \$27.15 billion budget June 29 containing draconian cuts in funding for education, welfare and environmental programs, while preserving tax breaks for corporations. The state Senate had approved the budget earlier in the week, and Gov. Tom Corbett signed it into law on June 30.

It was a blatant attack on the state’s workers and poor and yet another indicator of the open class warfare being waged by corporations and their political hacks against workers’ rights to education, employment and a safe environment.

Corbett announced in March his plans to cut education funding by \$1.1 billion. Under pressure to rescind some cuts, he restored \$269 million — most of it to wealthier school districts.

The budget also cut funding for state-related or -funded colleges and universities by 18 percent. This is less than the 50 percent cut originally proposed, but its impact is already being felt with tuition hikes. Temple University has announced a \$1,200 yearly increase.

Students and youth are not the only victims of Corbett’s budget. It contains a

nearly 50 percent cut in job training and day care subsidies for working parents. In a truly outrageous deal, the money “found” to restore funding cuts proposed for higher education came from steep cuts in public welfare programs for the poor, including food pantries and drug and alcohol treatment programs.

A controversial last-minute Senate measure also shifted control of billions in welfare funding from the legislature to Corbett’s administration. Welfare advocates are expressing alarm that the executive branch will shred the safety net for hundreds of thousands of people, mainly women and children, who depend on government assistance. (Philadelphia Inquirer, June 30)

This amendment to the welfare code could lead to reduced cash benefits and increased co-pays for child care and health care. In one of his first executive acts in 2011, Corbett eliminated \$700 million in funding for the popular adult-Basic program, which provided low-cost health insurance for the working poor.

Tax increases for workers, cuts for the rich

Corbett delivered on his campaign promise not to raise taxes. But it’s a trick. In order to make up for funding gaps in

budgets, most school districts, including Philadelphia, will be forced to raise local taxes. In addition, hours before the budget vote, Corbett pushed through a new tax law designed to deny education to working class and poor families, while increasing attacks on teachers and other public employee unions.

Corbett’s amendment mandates that if any school district imposes a property tax increase above the inflation rate, it must get voters’ approval. This state interference in local districts is similar to Corbett’s earlier support of legislation that would deny local governments the right to limit natural gas drilling in their districts.

All this has earned him the nickname “Corporate Tom.”

The massive funding cuts pushed through by Corbett and the politically conservative state legislature were never about a lack of money. The state Department of Revenue has reported that tax collections in June exceeded expectations, leaving the state with a \$785 million surplus. (AP, July 1)

Corbett’s protect-the-rich, make-the-poor-pay policies are also evident in his refusal to consider a per-well fee on natural-gas drilling, despite support for a levy by a majority of state residents and

significant sectors of the natural gas industry, which is taxed in every other state where it operates.

The governor’s budget also contains \$437 million for private development projects and grants, including “\$10 million for a proposed new headquarters for the profitable Philadelphia stock brokerage Janney Montgomery Scott.” (PI, June 30) Some \$600 million was also set aside to build two prisons.

Shortly before releasing his March 8 budget, Corbett “quietly and unilaterally approved an estimated \$200 million in tax breaks for businesses ... by adopting new federal tax rules.” Businesses would be allowed to “write off the entire cost of expenses in one year, rather than spreading the write-off out over several years.” (Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, March 5)

The capital stock and franchise tax on businesses will continue to be phased out, expiring altogether in 2014. With a 7 percent increase in debt-service payments, Corbett’s budget is also a boost to the banks. (PI, July 3)

Organized public opposition to these horrific cuts was too fragmented to make a real difference. However, there is little doubt that a rebellion against these austerity measures must surface as communities across the state begin to feel the pain. □

Talking with ‘Bloombergville’ arrestee Sara Flounders

By Dee Knight
“Bloombergville,” New York

On June 28, as the New York City Council was scheduled to vote on a pro-banker, anti-people budget deal, more than 100 residents of the “Bloombergville” encampment marched around City Hall. They had been sleeping on the sidewalk nearby for 16 days trying to stop Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s impending cuts.

At the same time, an organized resistance group entered the City Council office building across the street at 250 Broadway.

The marchers surged across the street to block the Council building in support of the resistance group, who were sitting down in the lobby, chanting “Stop the vote! Make the bankers pay! Stop the bankers’ budget! We have a right to be here!”

Those inside locked arms to block the entrance as police began separating the protesters and arresting them.

Outside, the crowd shouted “Let them go!” and “They say cut back, we say fight back!” Police pushed a few of those taking part in the inside action out the door. But the crowd in front surged forward to join those inside. Then, as police started to take the handcuffed sit-in protesters out a side entrance, the crowd outside met them, calling “Let them go!”

They surrounded the two police vans the arrestees were being loaded into and kept them from driving away. Police and protesters chased each other for two blocks.

Protests continued into the night, preventing a vote on the budget until the following morning.

WW spoke with one of those arrested, Sara Flounders. Flounders is co-director of the International Action Center and a veteran of dozens, if not hundreds, of protests, sit-ins, occupations, encampments and civil disobedience actions. She was in the mass actions that shut down New York over Sean Bell’s murder by the police. At that time hundreds of protesters closed all bridges and tunnels into the city.

“The Bloombergville protest succeeded in postponing the budget vote,” Flounders commented, “and in sending a strong message, widely covered in the media, of

popular resistance and opposition to this pro-banker budget. It was part of a whole series of resistance actions — from mass demonstrations by the unions to the 16-day encampment in front of City Hall to the civil disobedience action before the budget vote.

“After our arrest the police planned to issue a summons for a minor violation. But word came down from higher-up, after the initial paperwork was already completed and we were almost out the door, to hold us for 24 hours and send us down to the Central lockup.

“It’s almost entirely young Black and Latino people in the prison.” Flounders observed. “That’s who the police target.

That’s the neighborhoods the cops are sent to and the arrest quotas they’re given. To these youth I was ‘Grandma.’

“The whole system is set up to criminalize Black and Latino youth for doing things that are absolutely part of urban life, but for which they are particularly targeted,” Flounders continued. “They are run through the system — fingerprinted, scanned, photos taken, etc. — and come out with a record and a mug shot. That’s the racist way the courts, police and jails function.”

Flounders said most of the people in the jail were “arrested for fare card violations, having an open container on their own front stoop, being in a city park after 10 p.m., smoking a joint — petty, petty ‘crimes.’ Each of them, to get out, has to plead guilty to something, and of course they can’t afford a private lawyer. They get just a few minutes with a court-appointed attorney.

“These prisoners were overwhelmingly friendly and enthusiastically interested in the Bloombergville protest,” Flounders said. “They respected the idea of being arrested for a cause, and for challenging the repressive system.

“The Bloombergville encampment has been important,” Flounders commented, placing it alongside “the experience of past encampments and days of mass actions at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, the Republican National Convention the same year in Minneapolis, the March for Jobs tent city

WW
Interview



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Flounders, holding up sign, sits in with ‘Bloombergville’ resisters before being arrested.

at the 2009 G20 in Pittsburgh, the 2009 Detroit Peoples’ Summit encampment during a meeting of business leaders and CEOs, the Washington, D.C., encampments against the war and this winter’s mass takeover of the State Capitol in Madison, Wis. — to mention a few.”

She added that this protest is “also part of the whole climate of current confrontations in Greece, Spain and Britain, and the revolutionary change brought about by the massive occupation of Tahrir Square in Egypt, which grew into millions. There have been invaluable lessons. Millions are watching these confrontations, the tremendous occupations in Wisconsin and the actions in Trenton, N.J., last week.

“The question is how to continue the struggle and confront the bankers’ agenda. They want to cut every desperately needed social program in cities across the country, but to them two things are untouchable: the billions of dollars in interest paid to the banks and the hundreds of billions spent on war. It was really impor-

tant that this budget attack not go down without a struggle, and we need to continue the fight against all these cuts.”

All 13 Bloombergville arrestees were released after spending 24 hours in jail. Charged with trespassing, they were fined \$130 each.

Flounders concluded with an appeal: “We urgently need to raise \$1,700 to cover the fines. Please contribute whatever you can, as soon as possible. All are invited to a fundraiser on Saturday, July 9, to honor the Bloombergville attorneys, who contributed their legal services, and also Picture The Homeless, who guided the setup of our encampment and helped us keep it legal and viable for more than two weeks.”

Make donations through PayPal; send to bloombergville13@gmail.com. They must come from a bank account or PayPal account; the group cannot accept debit/credit card payments.

For more information about the Bloombergville protest, the Bloombergville 13 and the fundraiser, go to BloombergvilleNow.org. □

Attacks on abortion rights part of anti-worker agenda

By Sue Davis

Just as the right of public sector workers to collective bargaining has been attacked this year in state legislatures from New Hampshire to California, so too have there been widespread legislative attacks on women’s right to legal, safe, accessible abortion.

In fact, 447 anti-abortion bills were introduced this year in 49 states, according to statistics compiled by NARAL Pro-Choice America in a June 17 letter. That’s a 150 percent increase over last year.

While those politicians who introduced the bills swell with self-righteous pride at their so-called “pro-life” agenda, a sampling of the legislation shows just how totally unscientific, burdensome, patronizing — and downright hostile — these laws are to women. If the definition of being pro-life included the right of women to freely decide what’s best for themselves, these laws would be illegal.

States impose harsh limits on abortion

In a direct attack on Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in 1973, legislation in Louisiana has been introduced to imprison doctors for up to 15 years for providing abortions. A bill requiring police investigations of women who had miscarriages was considered in Georgia.

After anti-abortion referenda were defeated in South Dakota in 2006 and 2008, affirming the right to choice, legislators passed a law requiring a 72-hour mandatory waiting period, which would impose a huge burden on working women and mothers. Patients also have to listen to an anti-abortion lecture, rife with false and misleading information, at an unlicensed, unregulated “crisis pregnancy center,” whose purpose is to discourage women from having abortions.

Texas joined Oklahoma when it passed a law requiring doctors to perform an ultrasound on patients, play the sound of

the fetal heart and describe the images — no matter if a woman objects. Then women must wait 24 hours before going ahead with the procedure.

When Wisconsin, which led the anti-worker attacks, enacted legislation eliminating public funding for Planned Parenthood, which supplies needed health care nationally for 1.5 million poor women on Medicaid, it joined Indiana, Kansas and North Carolina.

Since Nebraska passed a 20-week limit on abortion last year, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma and Alabama followed suit this year. The law is based on the premise that the fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks, a concept disputed by medical organizations in the U.S. and Britain but promoted by the so-called “right to life” crowd. Guttmacher Institute statistics show that only 1.5 percent of the 1.21 million abortions each year (about 18,000) occur after 20 weeks, and these are almost always for medical emergencies. (New York Times, June 27)

Kansas issued provisions June 17 that would force the three abortion clinics there

to comply with strict physical plant requirements by July 1. But after the Center for Reproductive Rights filed a lawsuit against the requirements, a judge blocked enforcement. However, two women were denied needed health care before the injunction took effect. (New York Times, July 2)

In other legal challenges, CRR, the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood, either separately or together, were able to stop imposition of the waiting-period law in South Dakota, the one ending funding for Planned Parenthood in Indiana (also being challenged in Kansas) and the sonogram law in Texas.

What’s motivating these attacks

While poll after poll shows that the vast majority of working and oppressed people in the U.S. are more concerned about the unrelenting economic crisis, defined by rising unemployment and continuing foreclosures, and ending wars abroad, why are legislators focused on limiting women’s right to abortion instead of creating jobs?

Continued on page 8

WW
Commentary

U.S./NATO & Libyan puppets reject African plan for Libya cease-fire

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

This year’s 17th African Union Summit attempted once again to broker a cease-fire in the nearly five-month-old imperialist war against Libya. The meeting of the 53-member organization was held in Malabo, capital of the former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea, from June 30 to July 2.

The A.U.’s discussion of economic cooperation and the social conditions of youth was overshadowed by the work of its Ad-Hoc Committee on Libya. In its latest plan, the A.U. called for an immediate halt to the bombing attacks, which began March 19, and the beginning of serious negotiations aimed at establishing a political solution to the crisis inside Libya.

The Russian government also called for a NATO cease-fire in a meeting with the imperialist military alliance on July 3. South African President Jacob Zuma flew to Moscow in the aftermath of the A.U. Summit to promote the cease-fire efforts. Zuma noted that the framework advanced by the A.U. was the best mechanism for securing peace in Libya.

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe told journalists after returning to Harare from the A.U. Summit that he was quite pleased with the meeting. “Yes, yes, we are happy. Southern African Development Community countries and countries in other parts of Africa were happy with the outcome on Libya.” Mugabe added, “NATO should stop its terrorist attack on Libya. NATO cannot continue attacking Libya because they are not the rulers of the world. The United Nations should stand against NATO.” (Zimbabwe Sunday Mail, July 3)

TNC, Washington reject A.U. proposals

The A.U. plan would have brought about the cessation of hostilities, a com-

prehensive cease-fire, the reconciliation of the conflicting parties inside Libya, and internationally supervised national elections.

The political measures put forward by the A.U. Summit would result in the lifting of the siege imposed on cities and the movement of all troops, militias and armed elements from all parties to barracks; the ending of all attacks and abuses against civilians, including those who were forced to leave the country; the release of political prisoners; and unrestricted and unhindered access to civilians in dire need of humanitarian relief.

The Western-backed counterrevolutionaries called the Transitional National Council summarily rejected the cease-fire plan, as did Washington. “Rebel spokesman Abdel Hafiz Ghoga said that they outright dismissed the AU plan because it did not meet their basic demands, which calls for the ouster of Muammar Gadhafi, his sons and aides from his inner circle. Ghoga said the AU offer would have Gadhafi in power, something that was not acceptable to them.” (allheadlinenews.com, July 4)

Since March 11, the African Union has issued several communiqués calling for a cease-fire in Libya and the withdrawal of foreign involvement in the civil war. The imperialist states now bombing Libya and/or providing aid to the TNC have rejected all these calls.

A.U. rejects ICC warrants

The A.U. also refused to accept the legitimacy of the International Criminal Court warrants issued against Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi, his son Saif al-Islam and intelligence head Abdullah al-Senussi. From the Malabo Summit the continental organization said, “AU member-states shall not cooperate in the

execution of the arrest warrants.”

The A.U. added that issuing the ICC warrants “seriously complicates the efforts aimed at finding a negotiated political settlement to the crisis in Libya, which will also address, in a mutually reinforcing way, issues related to impunity and reconciliation.”

The A.U. had similarly rejected the ICC’s targeting of African leaders in 2009 when attempts were made to arrest Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

While the A.U. was working for a peaceful settlement, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton continued blatant, provocative rhetoric against the Libyan government. From Madrid on July 2, Clinton repeated the Obama administration’s demand that the Libyan leadership be overthrown.

Clinton said that Gadhafi “should step down from power. The rebels are gaining strength and momentum. We need to see this through.” (Associated Press, July 2)

Clinton added, “We will continue exerting the same military and political pressure.” She also praised the austerity measures imposed by the Spanish government on the working class, which is suffering from a 21 percent unemployment rate due to the world capitalist economic crisis.

The A.U. and Russia also condemned France’s openly supplying arms to the TNC. Speaking from Malabo, A.U. Commission Chair Jean Ping said that the French weapons “will be used to destabilize African states and to kidnap tourists for whom you pay ransom.” (sbpost.ie, July 3)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the French arms delivery represented a “crude violation” of a United Nations arms embargo that was called for in Security Council Resolution 1970. How-

ever, the U.S. State Department defended the French arms shipments to the rebels.

World opposition grows to war on Libya

Inside Libya itself, the defense forces have continued to hit rebel positions in the Nafusah Mountains and other areas of the country. A huge demonstration in Tripoli on July 1 brought out a million people in support of the government and in opposition to the imperialist war.

At the same time demonstrations and public meetings are continuing in the United States to oppose the war. In Harlem, a coalition of various Pan-Africanists, leftists and anti-war forces have called for a Millions March in defense of Libya and other African states under attack by Western countries.

The Final Call newspaper, a publication of the Nation of Islam, stated the following: “Disturbed by what they see as a White House that has ignored their concerns, anti-war activists called a press conference in Harlem to announce the ‘Millions March in Harlem’ protest and their demand for an end to the bombing of the North African nation of Libya and ending the illegal sanctions against Zimbabwe in Southern Africa.” (June 29)

The Freedom Party, the All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party, the New Black Panther Party, the Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People, the International Association Against Torture, the International Action Center and the Answer Coalition endorsed the march, among others.

The demonstration, set for Aug. 13, calls for an immediate halt to U.S. involvement in the war against Libya. The Obama administration claims the Pentagon’s engagement there is “limited,” but a press release issued by Defense Web on July 4 states: “U.S. Air Force and Navy aircraft are still flying hundreds of strike missions over Libya,” even though NATO allegedly took over such missions from the U.S. on March 31. □

More than 100 days of U.S./NATO bombing of LIBYA

14,000 bombing sorties



Report from Libya: Impact of U.S. war in Africa

Hear former U.S. Congressperson **Cynthia McKinney**, who recently returned from leading a delegation to Libya in opposition to the U.S. criminal destruction of that country.

Includes new VIDEO footage of U.S. war on Libya.

National 12-city tour organized by International Action Center in coordination with many antiwar and community organizations from July 7 to August 7, 2011. This is an educational and fund-raising tour to help recover the cost of Cynthia McKinney’s fact-finding delegation to Libya and to educate on the true cost of U.S. wars.

1 cruise missile could pay 10 teachers for a year.
We need jobs, health care and education, not budget cuts and war.

STOP U.S./NATO WAR ON LIBYA!

For more information and a complete list of cities or to help donate for the tour expenses see: **www.IACenter.org**

Abortion rights

Continued from page 7

Because these legislators are bought and paid for by the right wing of the ruling class that is hell-bent on making the workers pay for the crisis that the capitalists created. Capitalists like the libertarian Koch brothers, who believe in no government regulations — except those that protect and extend their power — are seeking to roll back all the rights won in the last century by working people, from collective bargaining to legal abortion.

These ruling class marauders hold to the patriarchal view that they, like cops or wealthy wheeler-dealers who rape, have the inherent right to force their will on women. After all, if women, particularly poor women who are disproportionately women of color, can be forced to obey the rules imposed on them, they will be too busy struggling to survive to fight back.

But the fightback is coming. And not just in the courts. What’s needed is a united army of far-seeing women and men who know what they need to thrive — comprehensive, not-for-profit health care for all; full employment; access to affordable housing and quality public education; and freedom to live in a planned society based on socialist equality and justice throughout the world. All that takes is vision and the will to fight. □

JULY 7	THURSDAY Houston
JULY 9	SATURDAY Peacestock, Hager City, WI Minneapolis
JULY 10	SUNDAY Albany, NY
JULY 11	MONDAY Washington, DC
JULY 14	THURSDAY Northampton, MA
JULY 24	SUNDAY Atlanta
JULY 27	WEDNESDAY Durham, NC
JULY 28	THURSDAY Newark, NJ
JULY 29	FRIDAY Boston
JULY 30	SATURDAY New York City
AUG. 6	SATURDAY Columbus, OH
AUG. 7	SUNDAY Los Angeles
AUG. 9	TUESDAY Vancouver, Canada

Demanding justice for the martyrs

Thousands fight police in Tahrir Square

By Joyce Chediac

Thousands of angry Egyptians took to the streets of Cairo and Alexandria at the end of June, battling the Central Security forces for hours before successfully pushing the riot police back. These were the most intense clashes in five months, since Egypt's 18-day revolution in January that ousted U.S.-client Hosni Mubarak.

The clashes saw the reappearance of the Central Security forces, who descended upon the demonstrators en masse, blanketing the crowd with tear gas and shooting rubber bullets at protesters, including the families of those martyred during the revolution.

This police riot came exactly five months after the Jan. 28 victory of Egyptian students and workers who fought the cops throughout the country and won. They sent the regime's thugs running back to their enclaves and even burnt down police stations.

In what some are calling a new stage of the struggle, Egypt's current ruling military council has shown itself to be the same repressive, brutal and unaccountable force as the old Mubarak regime.

At issue for the people is the military government's failure to implement demands made in the mass national demonstrations of January and February. Specifically, people are enraged at the government's refusal to bring to justice the police responsible for the murder of demonstrators and its repeated postponement of the trials of key figures in the former Mubarak regime.

Some former government ministers have been found guilty of corruption, but the trials of the two men many hold responsible for the police killing of unarmed demonstrators — Mubarak himself and the much despised former Interior Minister Habib el-Adly, who was in charge of the police — have yet to take place. On June 26, el-Adly's trial was postponed for a second

time. Families of the martyrs of the revolution weren't even allowed in the courtroom.

The June 30 trial of two Egyptian police charged with the death of Khaled Said, a 28-year-old man beaten to death in Alexandria last year, was also postponed. Said died in June 2010, after being dragged out of an internet café by plain-clothes police and assaulted in the street. Facebook pages set up to tell Said's story were used to coordinate Day of Rage protests on the streets of Cairo on Jan. 25, beginning the struggle that ousted Mubarak.

Meanwhile, police accused of killing demonstrators continue in their posts, and families of the victims report these cops are using their clout to try to bribe or threaten them to drop their legal cases.

Families of martyrs attacked by police

The June 28 pitched battle in Cairo began when police blocked some families of martyrs of the revolution from attending a meeting commemorating those killed.

They were attacked and arrested, causing angry protesters to gather at the Interior Ministry, which controls the police. Later thousands flooded Tahrir Square in solidarity. Protesters defended themselves against the police as they had done in the past — by breaking up the sidewalks in the square and pelting attacking police with pieces of concrete.

Thousands again took these issues to Tahrir Square on Friday, July 2, building roadblocks and setting up a tent city where some planned to stay until their demands were met. They want justice for the more than 850 people killed and the estimated 6,000 to 11,000 wounded during the revolution.

The street battle continued on July 3, according to demonstrators, after the tent city was attacked and set on fire by a group that contained police agents. As the struggle in Egypt continues, the next major demonstration in Tahrir Square has been called for July 8. □

Egyptian people press on:

'The revolution is not complete'

By Joyce Chediac
Cairo, Egypt

The Egyptian people's determination to hold their government accountable for promised social, economic and political change could be seen June 17 during the weekly Friday demonstration at Cairo's Tahrir Square.

A young woman wearing the head scarf known as a hijab and holding a microphone in her hand addressed the crowd from a raised platform. Several young men gave short talks in turn. People in the crowd hoisted others on their shoulders to lead chants, while small groups engaged in intense discussion.

Participants raised signs and banners detailing the issues that the ruling military council has not addressed. Topping that list was bringing the police and top officials in the regime of Hosni Mubarak to justice for their crimes against the people, including murdering protesters and looting the economy. Protesters were also concerned with low wages, Christian-Moslem solidarity and the upcoming elections and constitutional reform.

A young man carried a memorial sign with his younger brother's picture above the words: "He will always be in our hearts." He said he himself had sustained serious wounds from rubber bullets in the January-February protests, but his brother had been killed by three sniper bullets to the head and the heart. His view was that so far "nothing has changed." He returns to Tahrir Square every Friday, he said, to carry his brother's picture in the protests and make sure he did not die in vain.

A middle-aged man held a picture of Mubarak carrying a large sack on his shoulder labeled "The people's money." The sign read, "Jail him. He has destroyed our life for 30 years. No mercy for Mubarak and his henchmen."

Another sign called for jailing Mubarak's sons, Gamal and Alaa Mubarak. Like their father, they amassed huge personal fortunes at the people's expense.

Two men held a hand-lettered banner that said it all: "The Revolution is not com-



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Brother of young man killed by police in Tahrir Square holds up his photo as woman speaks to rally.

plete." Under this was a set of demands: "End emergency law," which has been in effect for three decades; "Replace military tribunals with civilian courts;" and "Elect new councils in each city." The last demand, illustrated by a crescent and a cross, read: "Jail those making trouble between Moslems and Christians."

Moslem-Christian solidarity

Progressives feel that sectarian attacks on churches are instigated by the government in order to divide the people. During the mass occupation of Tahrir Square for 18 days in January, Moslems stood guard while Christians prayed and vice-versa.

'Constitution before elections'

A man from Suez City carried a sign reading, "Constitution before elections." Parliamentary elections are scheduled for September. The new parliament will then be charged with writing a new constitution. Most progressives oppose this, however, as September elections come too soon for grassroots parties to be able to participate. Only the parties of the rich will be able to run. People fear a parliament dominated by bourgeois parties

will rewrite the constitution to meet their needs and not the needs of the people.

Additionally, to be on the ballot a new party must amass 5,000 members and then buy ads in the two major Egyptian papers that include the 5,000 names. This arbitrary ruling makes it almost impossible for working-class parties to run.

A young woman in the square held a poster graphically illustrating why the constitution should be rewritten before elections are held. Her three-dimensional poster showed a city block with a bystander gazing in confusion at a building missing the bottom floor. The poster read: "Constitution first. You can't construct a building without the first floor."

Other progressives explained to this reporter that they seek to change the language in the constitution from defining Egypt as a Moslem country with a basis in Sharia law to defining it as a secular state based on civil law.

Israel gas deal: 'Theft to please the U.S.'

An international issue generating widespread outrage here is the Mubarak regime's filling 40 percent of Israel's natural gas needs. While two-thirds of Egyptians live in poverty, the government sells gas to Israel at a third of the international price,

according to Mamdouh el Habashi, a founder of the Egyptian Socialist Party. This is seen as pleasing the U.S. at the expense of the Egyptian people.

The ruling military council continues to honor this contract, which Egypt cannot fulfill without importing gas from Qatar at international prices, el Habashi said. On July 3, for the third time since Mubarak was ousted, an explosion damaged the Sinai pipeline delivering this gas to Israel.

'Sense of entitlement among all classes'

The overwhelming impression this reporter had was that it is the Egyptian people, not the government, who have changed since the mass movement finally ousted Mubarak in February. Before these events few Egyptians voted, as the elections were rigged and the winners known beforehand. But in the March 19 interim elections, an election monitor told this reporter that the turnout was huge, with some people waiting on line for seven hours to cast ballots.

There is a sense of expectation among all classes, including the workers, who feel they are entitled to a government that is accountable to the people, that carries out justice against those who looted the country and murdered the revolutionaries and youth, and that gives relief from grinding poverty while fulfilling the very basic needs of a job, a home, food and healthcare. Expectations have been raised, and while some have said they are willing to wait for this, they are not willing to wait forever.

What will the next move be in this ongoing struggle, which has touched every level of Egypt's population? What leadership will emerge? Will the people's movement be able to defend itself against the state's onslaught? All this remains to be seen. □

Eyewitness
TAHRIR SQUARE

Greece: Cradle of class struggle

Given the oppressive and criminal role of Western imperialism in the world today, it is no compliment to call Greece the “cradle of Western civilization.” But it is true that this summer Greece is the cradle of the class struggle against that same imperialist ruling class. In the past two years the unions there — those in the union federation called PAME — have held 20 general strikes, the last one for two consecutive days on June 28-29.

Along with the well-organized and politically clear anti-capitalist and anti-banker program of the PAME labor unions and their allies in the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), there have been tens of thousands of “indignant ones” — not yet organized, but anti-establishment people, including many youths — marching and demonstrating in Athens’ Syntagma Square. They are attempting to convince the Parliament to choose to serve the workers in Greece rather than the bankers in France and Germany.

On June 29 the Georges Papandreou government — his PASOK party is nominally “Socialist” but is in reality a complete tool of the international and local big capitalists — passed the latest austerity program. Papandreou then unleashed the Greek cops against the demonstrators in the square, injuring 500 of our sisters and brothers there. The austerity plan not only cuts social services and public worker jobs, but is offering the remaining nationalized industries for sale to the rich. It even allows corporations to lease Greek islands.

To understand the heroism shown by the workers in Greece, you have to know that they are combating not only the Greek bankers and capitalists but their more powerful co-criminals in France and Germany. The banks in these imperialist powers — along with the big capitalists and bankers in Greece itself — are using Papandreou to squeeze money out of the workers that the Greek government owes these banks as interest payments on loans.

But it wasn’t the workers who got the benefit of these loans — it was the Greek capitalist class.

The terms of payment are set by the European Central Bank, the European Union and the International Monetary

Fund, called the “Troika,” which is a relatively benign term considering that they — along with the bosses in Greece — represent the biggest thieves on the continent.

Elisseos Vagenas, member of the Central Committee of the KKE, wrote an article during the two-day strike that gives an overall picture. Here’s one point he makes in his conclusion:

“The communists in Greece support firmly that it is the plutocracy that must pay for the crisis as it is responsible for it. At the same time, the KKE believes that the struggle for every problem of the people must develop in the direction of organizing, concentrating and preparing broad popular and working-class forces not only in order to create better conditions for the sale of labor power but also for the overthrow of the exploitative system so as to pave the way for the people’s power and the people’s economy, for socialism.” (For the entire article, see inter.kke.gr.)

Think of the governors and mayors in the U.S. who are cutting pensions, enforcing evictions, laying off teachers and public workers, closing schools and firehouses to pay off bonds to the big U.S. banks and you get an idea of what is happening in Greece — and why U.S. imperialism backs Papandreou against the workers. The workers there are fighting for all of us, as well as for the workers of Portugal, Spain and Ireland whose increased servitude is also being planned by the Troika in cahoots with local capitalists.

There is no doubt that the struggle will be hard. But we can all take courage from the decision of the workers in Greece not to shrink before the challenge. The longer they hold on, the likelier a victory that seems impossible can become conceivable. It then can spread and move from being conceivable to being possible.

What class-conscious workers and all progressives in the other imperialist countries — including here in the United States — should be thinking about now is this: What can we do to help the workers in Greece hold on and win?

Long live the struggle of the workers and youth in Greece! □

As Greek gov’t bows to U.S./Israeli pressure

Flotilla struggles to bring aid to Gaza

By Kathy Durkin

Greece is now in the eye of the storm in the struggle to break the siege of Gaza.

In late June ten ships with hundreds of international activists were ready to sail in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla II from Greece. They sought to challenge and break Israel’s illegal naval blockade and occupation of the territory, to highlight the injustices and humanitarian crisis faced by the 1.5 million Palestinians there, and to show international solidarity. They were bringing 3,000 letters of support, medicine and other aid.

However, on July 1 the Greek government banned flotilla boats in Greek ports from sailing to “the maritime area of Gaza.” Officials gave no explanation.

On the same day, the Greek Coast Guard intercepted the U.S. delegates’ ship, the Audacity of Hope, one mile offshore from the port of Perama, claiming the boat and its documents were not in order. They arrested the boat’s captain, John Klusmire. Charges were dropped on July 5 and he was released. Ann Wright, a key organizer and a former U.S. Army colonel, said that the Coast Guard aimed loaded M-16s at passengers. The 36 people on board — who were all unarmed — included noted African-American writer Alice Walker and Hedy Epstein, an 87-year-old Holocaust survivor. Many U.S. journalists were there, too.

On July 4 the Greek Coast Guard stopped the Canadian flotilla ship Tahrir — which carried passengers from many countries — three miles from Crete’s Agios Nikolaos port as it sped toward international waters. Armed officials boarded the ship and steered it back to port.

Imperialists, Israel sabotage flotilla

Flotilla activists see the long arm of the U.S. government behind Greece’s ban on sailing to Gaza. They also point out that the U.S. State Department threatened the mission’s U.S. participants with arrest, fines and jail on their return.

Audrey Bomse, co-chair of the Free Palestine Subcommittee of the National Lawyers Guild, said that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton signaled “advance approval for Israel to violently attack [the flotilla].” (palsolidarity.org, July 1)

The organizers also blame the Greek government for caving in to Israeli pressure. Constant administrative delays and obstacles were put in the way of the flotilla prior to the ban and seizure of the ships. Ship captains were threatened with long prison terms, boats were prevented from refueling, and vessels were sabotaged.

The Irish Ship to Gaza campaign says about damage to their ship, the MV Saoirse, in the Turkish coastal town of Gocek that Israel “must be viewed as the chief suspect in this professional and calculating act of sabotage.” (freegaza.org, June 30) The Greek-Swedish-Norwegian boat, the Juliano, was similarly damaged in the Greek port of Piraeus. The Globe and Mail of Canada called these attacks “hallmarks of Israel’s secretive Mossad security agency.” (July 1)

The Israeli government made it clear that it would stop at nothing to prevent the flotilla from breaking its blockade and reaching Gaza. It prepared as if for a war campaign. Scores of cabinet meetings have been held on this subject and military maneuvers conducted on how to stop the ships. Diplomats and lobbyists pressured all countries tied to participation in the flotilla to stop it.

For months Israeli officials have vilified flotilla participants, accusing them of “harboring terrorists” and seeking a violent con-

frontation with Israeli military forces. Israel even accused the boats of carrying sulfur for mustard gas and other weapons to attack Israeli military forces, reports the National Lawyers Guild. (palsolidarity.org, July 1) The Israeli Defense Forces threatened to use any means necessary to stop the humanitarian mission.

Moreover, no one who supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people has forgotten that May 31 marked the one-year anniversary of the Israeli commandos’ assault on the Turkish Freedom Flotilla I ship, the Mavi Marmara, which resulted in the murder of nine Turkish activists and dozens of injuries.

It is important to emphasize the major role of the big imperialist powers in stopping this solidarity mission. In addition to the United States, the United Nations leadership and European Union pressed governments to deter Gaza-bound flotillas. (Associated Press, July 3)

Additionally, with the spiraling economic crisis in Greece, its government is bending to E.U. and International Monetary Fund demands to impose austerity cutbacks on the workers to obtain funds for interest payments on European loans. Even as the state is cracking down on the massive, militant revolt of the workers against the cutbacks, it is also blocking acts of international solidarity with the Palestinians, in line with the imperialist governments and bankers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, acknowledging governments that helped stop the flotilla, specifically thanked Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, who “had been closely cooperating with Israel in coordinating moves related to the flotilla.” (New York Times, July 2)

Struggle to show solidarity goes on

However, the struggle to support Gaza goes on. Flotilla activists have demonstrated at Israeli and U.S. embassies in Athens and even aboard their docked ships. They’ve met with Greek anti-austerity protesters who are camped outside the Parliament building and who, in turn, have demanded their government let the ships sail.

Pro-Palestinian forces are protesting at Greek embassies in many cities, demanding the ships and delegates be allowed to leave for Gaza. They ask progressive organizations to do the same wherever possible.

The Free Gaza Movement vows to continue the struggle to break the siege of Gaza, whether by boat, plane or other means, to publicize the humanitarian crisis — despite Israel’s denials — and to show concrete support for its people.

On July 1 the FGM said, “[O]ur intention and determination to reach the besieged Gaza is not weakened; on the contrary, it strengthens. The coordinated efforts of Israeli and Greek governments do not scare us ... these efforts confirm that they fear us. They fear the friendship of populations, the international solidarity, the humanitarian sensitivity, our refusal to accept the theft of basic rights of Palestinians and our common fight for dignity and justice.” (freegaza.org)

This struggle has spotlighted once again the horrific U.S.-backed Israeli siege of Gaza. It has brought more world and media attention to the crisis there and is a display of genuine solidarity with the Palestinian people. Nothing will stop that. The more the U.S., Israel and other imperialist forces try to deter it, the more global solidarity will grow. Along with that more concrete campaigns of support will develop.

The imperialists have lost this battle in the court of public opinion. The people of the world want an end to the siege of Gaza. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Alegría por la victoria del matrimonio del mismo sexo

Continúa de página 12

¡Que siga la lucha!

Una estrategia de estado-por-estado no puede ganar los derechos plenos. Esta es una lucha nacional, y últimamente será el movimiento a nivel nacional lo que ganará todos los derechos en el nivel federal.

Hay lecciones importantes que aprender del movimiento de los Derechos Civiles afro-americanos de los años 50 y 60. Había luchas en muchos sitios, todas de vital importancia — pero fue la Ley de Derechos Civiles en 1964 la que fue la victoria decisiva.

En cuanto al matrimonio, en una época cuando muchos estados todavía prohibían el matrimonio entre

negros/as y blancos/as — fue la decisión de la Corte Suprema de EE.UU en Loving vs. Virginia en 1967 lo que eliminó finalmente esas leyes racistas. En una declaración de junio 2007 conmemorando el 40 aniversario de la decisión, la misma Mildred Loving dijo que apoyaba el matrimonio del mismo sexo, un año antes de morir.

Ahora, mientras pausamos para apreciar la dulzura de ganar el derecho al matrimonio del mismo sexo en Nueva York y felicitar a todos/as quienes escojan reclamar este nuevo derecho, avanzamos hacia la próxima etapa de la lucha. Luchemos para ganar derechos federales plenos para la gente LGBT. □

In Honduras, providing free health care is resistance

By Heather Cottin

Dr. Luther Castillo, who was among the first to apply for free medical education in Cuba, was in the first graduating class of the Latin American School of Medicine in 2005. While he was in New York for the June 30 memorial for the Rev. Lucius Walker, a man he called “the symbol of solidarity,” Castillo told Workers World about his life and his work setting up health care for the poor throughout the Caribbean.

As a child, Castillo dreamed of being a doctor. His family in Honduras’ Garifuna community would have had to work a full year to buy him just one book for medical school. But the National Autonomous University of Honduras would never have accepted a Garifuna into medical school.

The inhabitants of the 46 Garifuna communities in Honduras descend from West Africans captured in the Atlantic slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries who were taken to St. Vincent’s island. These men and women refused to become slaves for the French and the British. They fought the Europeans, escaping into the mountains, and joined the Indigenous Arawak people resisting colonization of the Caribbean.

The Arawak and Africans who intermarried were known as fierce fighters, the “Red Caribs.” On April 12, 1797, they commandeered five ships and sailed to Honduras, later also settling in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Belize. In these countries they faced repression, and the British reduced their population by half through deliberate starvation and incarceration. Grandparents pass down this story of resistance to every Garifuna child.

Health care comes to oppressed Garifuna communities

Garifuna communities have always been terribly poor and faced racism in Honduras. For Castillo, Cuba’s founding of the LASM made his childhood dream of being a doctor possible. At graduation he set out to help his people in Honduras.

“In 2005 three Garifuna doctors, graduates from LASM, determined to build clinics for our people who had no access to health care. We got a piece of land do-

nated, and we started to care for the poorest of the poor. We offered free health care and education in our clinics and in our hospital,” Castillo told Workers World.

When the military coup overthrew the Manuel Zelaya government in June 2009, the fascists’ first targets in Garifuna communities were Dr. Castillo’s clinics. The coup regime of Roberto Micheletti shut them down and destroyed them. Undaunted, Dr. Castillo continues to provide health care and has built a new hospital. Cuban doctors and medical students from LASM come to Honduras to provide free health care for the Garifuna people.

Miguel Facussé, the oligarch tied to the current, post-coup Pepe Lobo regime, employs death squads to crush the Indigenous community in the Baja Aguan region. Facussé is also a chief landowner in the Garifuna regions in northern Honduras. So the people there face gun thugs who hate the Cuban-trained doctors and nurses.

People of the region, both Indigenous and Garifuna, have lost their ancestral lands to the oligarchs and international corporations, along with the right to fish in the ocean.

“The Garifuna people have been in resistance since we were dragged out of Africa in the 17th century, and now through this resistance we are organizing to get land and health care and education for people,” Castillo said. “In the first five years our project has treated more than 12,000 people.”

With few funds available, Castillo and the doctors, nurses and volunteers in the 46 communities are also developing breast cancer awareness programs and a sickle cell anemia project.

Providing health care in Haiti

Castillo is not only organizing in Honduras. He is concerned about the development of medical care for all the people of the global South. “Seven thousand doctors have graduated from the LASM,” he said. “We are in the process of creating Medisur, [which is] building free health care in the poorest countries on earth under the organizing leadership of these Cuban-trained doctors.”

Since 1998, thousands of LASM-

trained doctors have provided health care in Haiti. Two days after the Haitian earthquake struck, the Cuban government asked Dr. Castillo to organize an International Medical Brigade to help. He contacted more than 2,000 graduates of the LASM who volunteered to come. Castillo chose those who “could spend more than three months in Haiti.”

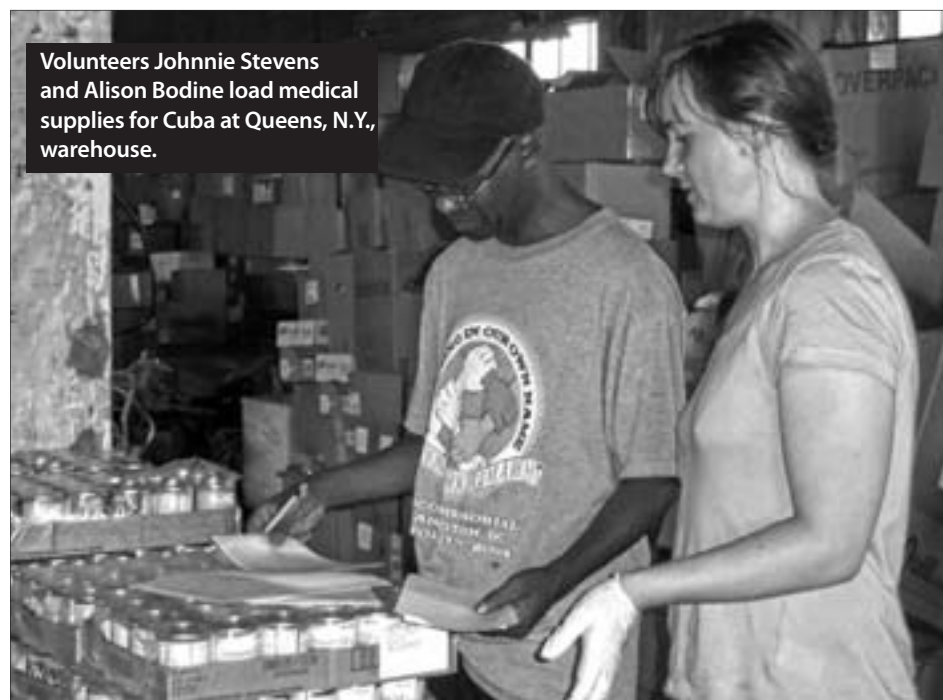
Some 930 health professionals, the largest medical contingent, arrived in Haiti. “The media says nothing about the brigade, but they reside in 10 different places in Haiti and are still there, helping combat the cholera epidemic,” said Castillo.

“We have a deep commitment to our patients, and the Haitian people love the Cuban-trained doctors. We live with them and offer the solidarity of medicine. It is

easy for us from the Caribbean and Latin America to understand their struggle.” Castillo was referring to the Haitian revolutionaries who were the first people in the Americas to fight colonialism and slavery in the early 19th century and who supported Latin America’s liberator, Simón Bolívar. “They opened the path for the struggle. Now they are struggling for life under the guns of the U.N. and the U.S.”

“LASM doctors are trained in humanity and solidarity. We are standing with the Haitian people. This we call resistance in action.” Dr. Castillo is doing this in Honduras and Haiti, and MEDISUR will internationalize these projects. “We graduates of LASM with the support of Cuba are resisting the world’s privatized health care system.” □

Rev. Walker remembered at sendoff for Cuba Caravan



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

By Dolores Cox New York

The 22nd Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan sendoff on June 30 from New York’s renowned Riverside Church included a memorial tribute commemorating the life of the Rev. Lucius Walker, IFCO/Pastors for Peace founding director, who passed away last year shortly after returning from the caravan to Cuba. Pastors for Peace is a project of the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization.

Among the speakers at the sendoff were Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General and founder of the International Action Center; Dr. Luther Castillo, director of the First Garifuna People’s Hospital and member of the National Resistance Front of Honduras; Ninaj Raoul, member of IFCO’s board of directors and Haitian Women for Haitian refugees; Charles Rangel, U.S. Representative from New York City; Rodolpho Benitez Verson, deputy ambassador of Cuba to the United Nations; Ellen Bernstein, acting co-director of IFCO; Frank Velgara, of the July 26 Coalition and Puerto Rican independence movement; and Gail Walker, Rev. Walker’s daughter.

For more than 40 years Rev. Walker led Pastors for Peace through innumerable struggles for peace and justice “locking horns with the empire” in the U.S. and North America, Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. Walker’s vision of a better world guides IFCO in continuing

his legacy. The 22nd caravan will also witness the graduation of the 2011 class of doctors at Cuba’s Latin American School of Medicine, which includes U.S. students. Half of this year’s caravan consists of people of color.

Rev. Walker believed there should be no barriers to friendship. To Cuba, only 90 miles away from the U.S., the caravan extends a hand of friendship and solidarity. Cuba is the only country in the world which U.S. citizens cannot legally visit. Additionally, Cuba’s economy and people suffer undue burden and hardship due to the decades of U.S. economic blockade, which has cost Cuba more than \$100 billion in lost trade. Cuba absurdly remains on the U.S. “terrorist” list.

In an act of civil disobedience against the travel ban and blockade, Pastors for Peace challenges the U.S. by not asking for or accepting a U.S. government license. The caravan arrives in Cuba as ambassadors for a people-to-people foreign policy based on mutual respect. IFCO vows to keep the pressure on the U.S. government until the travel and trade blockades are lifted.

Beginning July 2 the caravan’s 13 routes will crisscross 130 cities in the U.S. and Canada. At each stop the caravan will collect donated construction supplies and tools, medical supplies and equipment, and educational and cultural supplies for Cuba. The caravan expects to reach the Texas/Mexico border on July 17 and from there go to Cuba. It returns to the U.S. on Aug. 1. □

750,000 British workers go out General strike defends pensions

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what is happening in the United States, where teachers especially and other public workers have been under attack.

The unions say there was strong support for the June 30 strike, with, for example, 85 percent of the schools closed or disrupted and 85 colleges closed. Reports state that 30,000 workers marched in London, with thousands participating in marches in many other cities and towns.

Planning for the fall

The labor movement in Britain is discussing what steps to take next in this ongoing class struggle. The big question is whether or not this one-day action is a turning point in the labor movement, which had been gradually losing ground over the past 30 years.

In the 1970s, strikes were usual events in Britain, with worker-days on strike totaling 10 million in seven of the 10 years of that decade. Many strikes led to gains for the workers. In the early 1980s, the

Margaret Thatcher government — in tandem with the Ronald Reagan administration in the U.S. — opened up an attack on organized labor coinciding with restructuring of the capitalist economy.

Thatcher’s attack defeated a miners’ strike and set back the labor movement for decades. The June 30 action is a break with labor passivity in the face of ruling class aggression. Already some of the union leaders have spoken of expanding the one-day strike into more extended actions in the fall.

Mark Serwotka, the general secretary of the Public and Civil Service Union, warned that the ranks of the strikers would grow to 4 million by autumn unless ministers backed down. Serotka said June 30 “delivered a message to the government. The workers will not tolerate this attack on their hard-earned pensions.” He also warned that the next step would be “much much bigger and will involve more unions.” (Independent, July 1) □

Alegría por la victoria del matrimonio del mismo sexo

Por Shelley Ettinger

Una multitud enorme, estimada en 2 millones de personas por los/as funcionarios del Heritage of Pride (Herencia del Orgullo Gay) llenó las calles de Manhattan el 26 de junio para el desfile de lesbianas, gay, bi, trans y queer. Reinaba el júbilo.

Apenas 36 horas antes de que los/as manifestantes comenzaran a marchar a las 12 horas, el matrimonio homosexual había sido legalizado en el estado de Nueva York.

La gente había estado celebrando desde que el proyecto de ley fuera aprobado la noche del viernes. Hoy domingo, la emoción de la victoria electrizó a la multitud en la marcha anual que marca el 42do aniversario de la Rebelión de Stonewall.

Workers World/Mundo Obrero se une a la celebración. Saludamos a los/as combatientes cuya lucha logró este avance hacia la igualdad. Y exigimos la plena igualdad ahora: el reconocimiento federal de los derechos en el matrimonio del mismo sexo, así como, finalmente, una ley federal de derechos civiles que prohíba toda discriminación contra las personas LGBT.

Es apropiado que este triunfo coincidiera con el fin de semana del Orgullo Gay — porque es en realidad la lucha de masas por más de cuatro décadas lo que ganó los derechos matrimoniales en Nueva York. El movimiento LGBT, que se inició con la gran rebelión contra la policía en el Stonewall Inn, hace 42 años, se ha movilizad, protestado, marchado y realizado huelgas, levantándose una y otra vez desde entonces.

Esta acción de masas contra la opresión ha logrado algo notable. Ha cambiado la conciencia. Así que ahora, en un cambio impresionante que no podía haberse previsto pocos años atrás, todas las encuestas de opinión pública muestran que la mayoría de la gente en este país cree que las parejas del mismo sexo deberían tener el

Luchemos por todos los derechos

derecho a contraer matrimonio.

Esto no significa que la desigualdad, la discriminación y la violencia hayan sido vencidas, especialmente para las personas LGBT de color, las personas trans y los/as jóvenes. Tampoco significa que las fuerzas reaccionarias estén dispuestas a rendirse. Queda bastante lucha por delante, y habrá reveses junto a las victorias.

Sin embargo, el apoyo masivo de los derechos LGBT es un hecho, creando una presión popular para el cambio. Es esta presión la que llevó al estado de Nueva York a legalizar el matrimonio del mismo sexo.

No agradezcamos a Cuomo

Ningún crédito se le debe al gobernador de Nueva York Andrew Cuomo. Nadie lo debe resaltar como si fuera el héroe de esta historia. Cuomo es un reaccionario cruel que recorta los programas de ayuda y está en contra de los sindicatos, los/as obrero/as y los/as pobres. La forma en que maniobró para ponerse en la posición de gran hombre que entregó a la comunidad LGBT esta ley, es la muestra más descarada de la demagogia usada por un político en mucho tiempo.

Cuomo firmó la ley después de obligar a los sindicatos de empleados estatales a aceptar una terrible serie de concesiones. Acaba de recortar presupuestos y aumentó la matrícula en la Universidad Estatal de Nueva York y en la de la Ciudad de Nueva York, cerrando el acceso a los sistemas universitarios estatales y municipales para muchos/as estudiantes de clase trabajadora, sobre todo inmigrantes y gente de color. Él está eliminando los programas sociales por todas partes, empujando el

tipo de asalto racista contra la clase obrera y los/as oprimidos de Nueva York que ni siquiera el pasado gobernador republicano hubiera podido salirse con la suya. Todo esto afecta a las personas LGBT, que después de todo son, como la mayoría de la gente, parte de la clase obrera.

Sin embargo, hete aquí, que se presenta como el gran libertador. No lo es. Cuomo habrá firmado la ley. Habrá llevado a cabo las maniobras parlamentarias necesarias para lograr su aprobación — y por cierto, estuvo de acuerdo con una serie de escandalosas excepciones que permite todo tipo de entidades religiosas y cuasi-religiosas a seguir discriminando contra las parejas del mismo sexo. E incluso puede haber ayudado a que donantes ricos financiaran los esfuerzos de cabildeo final. Nada de esto fue decisivo.

La lucha fue lo decisivo.

Con cada victoria contra la desigualdad, la clase trabajadora entera se fortalece. Ahora en Nueva York, hay un instrumento menos con el cual la patronal puede tratar de dividir a los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as, una cuña artificial menos que obstaculice la unidad.

Cuestión de igualdad de derechos

La institución del matrimonio heterosexual está arraigada en la sociedad de clase y está fundamentada en la subyugación de las mujeres. Su propósito original era codificar la paternidad, asegurar la herencia patrilínea e imponer la posesión de la mujer por el hombre. El matrimonio ha funcionado tradicionalmente como parte de la opresión de las mujeres.

Pero el matrimonio moderno es también un compendio de más de 1.000 dere-

chos y privilegios legales. A las parejas del mismo sexo le son negadas el acceso a esos derechos y privilegios. Ésta es una discriminación flagrante. Por esto la lucha para ganar la igualdad matrimonial es una cuestión de derechos civiles básicos. Por esta razón, y porque es parte de la lucha de clases en general, todo/a socialista debe apoyar esta lucha y aplaudir cada avance a lo largo del camino.

A la misma vez debe ser entendido que en Nueva York y en todos los estados donde la igualdad matrimonial sea ganada, la victoria es mayormente simbólica. Ciertamente el simbolismo es importante; solo pregunte a cualquiera de las parejas que alegremente festejaban en la Marcha del Orgullo Gay. Cada batalla, en cualquier ciudad o estado, es importante — especialmente la lucha actual en la corte para derrotar la Proposición 8, que prohíbe el matrimonio del mismo sexo en California.

Pero más de 35 estados hoy en día prohíben el matrimonio del mismo sexo. A nivel nacional, la Ley en Defensa del Matrimonio, firmada por el Presidente Bill Clinton en 1996, prohíbe cualquier derecho para parejas del mismo sexo aunque esté casada legalmente. Todo eso debe ser derrotado a nivel federal.

Se tomará una lucha continua para ganar este cambio nacionalmente. La mayoría de los/as políticos a nivel nacional, desde la Casa Blanca hasta el Congreso, no están dispuestos/as a tomar una posición a favor de los derechos plenos. En un evento del sector LGBT del Partido Demócrata para recaudar fondos el pasado 3 de junio, el Presidente Barack Obama habló sobre su ostensible apoyo por los derechos LGBT en forma muy imprecisa rehusando endosar la igualdad matrimonial.

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En abril de 2010, la cámara de representantes de los EE.UU. aprobó el proyecto HR 2499, conocido irónicamente como “la ley de democracia de Puerto Rico de 2010”, un plebiscito que en palabras del mismo Congreso según su sitio web, “proveerá un proceso para la autodeterminación del pueblo de Puerto Rico, sancionado por el sistema federal”. (www.gpo.gov)

Este fue presentado por el representante (con voz pero sin voto) de la colonia en el Congreso de los EE.UU., Pedro Pierluisi. Él es Comisionado Residente de Puerto Rico en Washington, bajo la administración pro-estadidad del gobernador Luis Fortuño, en cuyo nombre el proyecto de ley fue presentado. Sumando a las contradicciones y falsedades de la situación colonial, el gobernador Fortuño pertenece al ala derecha del Partido Republicano en los EE.UU. y al PNP (Partido Nuevo Progresista) en la isla, mientras que su representante en el Congreso de los EE.UU., el Comisionado Residente, es del PNP en la isla, pero miembro del Partido Demócrata en los EE.UU.

Se han realizado muchos plebiscitos y referendos sobre el estatus en Puerto Rico, pero esta es la primera vez que el



Rafael Cancel Miranda

Gobierno de la isla busca la aprobación formal de su amo en el imperio, pues este plebiscito, de ser aprobado en el Senado, legalmente autorizará a P.R. a realizar un plebiscito. ¡Qué prueba de la situación colonial!

Aunque las fuerzas pro independencia en la isla están muy claras sobre esta farsa, hay algunas dudas en la mente de algunas personas. Con el fin de responder a estas dudas, el patriota puertorriqueño y ex preso político Rafael Cancel Miranda escribió el 21 de junio la carta abierta a continuación titulada ¿Se repite la farsa?

¿Se repite la farsa?

En estos días me preguntó un reportero acerca de un llamado plebiscito sobre el futuro de Puerto Rico en el cual podrían participar los extranjeros que juren ciudadanía, pero no así los puertorriqueños que residen fuera de Puerto Rico.

Respondí que cualquier plebiscito en la colonia sería ilegal y fraudulento pues el poder colonial y sus serviles controlan la vida sociopolítica, económica y hasta síquica del pueblo puertorriqueño. Y, además, ¿de qué ciudadanía hablan? ¿Qué ciudadanía juraría un extranjero? ¿La puertorriqueña o la estadounidense? Ya sabemos de qué lado estarían esos extranjeros y por qué. La ciudadanía estadounidense de por sí constituye una ciudadanía extranjera ilegalmente impuesta en Puerto Rico. Por otra parte, los puertorriqueños, no importa dónde se encuentren, siguen siendo puertorriqueños.

En 1952 el gobierno de Estados Unidos intentó engañar al mundo con un supuesto “plebiscito” para la creación del

llamado ELA. Declararon en ese entonces que por virtud de ese “plebiscito” Puerto Rico había dejado de ser colonia. Ya casi 60 años después, todos saben que aquello fue un engaño pues los mismos comités nombrados por la Casa Blanca han afirmado que Puerto Rico sigue siendo una colonia, confirmando así lo que Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irvin Flores Rodríguez y yo fuimos a denunciar en el Congreso de Washington, D.C. el 1 de marzo de 1954. Podríamos ampliar, pero no lo haré. Simplemente diré que los yanquis no hicieron ningún plebiscito en 1898 para invadirnos. ¿Por qué tendrían que hacerlo para irse? Es la misma treta, con las mismas palabras, para justificar ante el mundo el coloniaje al que nos tienen sometidos. Muchos puertorriqueños fueron engañados en 1952. No caigamos en la misma trampa. Además, el derecho de los pueblos a su independencia no es cuestión de tanto más cuanto, y solo los libres pueden votar libremente. No hay poder que pueda alterar esa verdad. □